

RESOLUTION NO. RS2019-1723

A resolution recognizing the 100th Anniversary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Nashville Branch.

WHEREAS, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was formed in 1909 to address the issues of racism in America and came on the heels of a race riot in Springfield, Illinois; and

WHEREAS, the Nashville Branch was chartered on February 10, 1919 by Wesley Crutcher, J.C. Napier, W.D. Hawkins, Sr., Dr. Henry Allen Boyd, Dr. A.M. Townsend, and Attorney Walter S. Walker; and

WHEREAS, since its inception, the Nashville Branch has worked to improve the political, educational, social and economic status of minority groups, eliminate racial prejudice, and take lawful action to secure the elimination of racial prejudices; and

WHEREAS, thirty-one men and four women have served as branch presidents including the first branch president, Dr. W.J. Walker, who had the longest tenure in the history of the local organization, and Mrs. C.M. Hayes, who was the first woman elected branch president, serving during the era of desegregation of Nashville Public Schools; and

WHEREAS, in the early 1960s, the branch received space for an office and permanent headquarters through a generous donation from Mr. J.W. Frierson, a Church of Christ leader and successful businessman; and

WHEREAS, throughout its existence, the Nashville Branch has been involved in movements to create change in the African-American community; and

WHEREAS, attorneys Z. Alexander Looby and Avon Williams implemented the NAACP's legal social justice strategies locally, and won the lawsuit to support the equalization of pay for Black teacher's salaries in 1942; and

WHEREAS, in 1946, Looby and Thurgood Marshall led the team of NAACP lawyers who successfully defended the thirty-four Black citizens that were jailed after what became known as the Columbia, Tennessee race riots; and

WHEREAS, in 1961, the local branch was instrumental in changing the South Central Bell Telephone Company's policy regarding the non-hiring of Black operators; and

WHEREAS, the Nashville Branch was also responsible for sparking the movement to desegregate Nashville Public Schools, as well as helping to change policies regarding Black citizens' access to the Parthenon, the Nashville Public Library, airport, state parks, and the state museum; and

WHEREAS, more recent civil rights activities by the branch include involvement in the passage of the new Equal Business Opportunity Law, voter registration drives, job opportunities and expungement clinics, criminal justice action, supporting the establishment of Nashville's Community Oversight Board, and supporting the call to Governor Bill Haslam to grant clemency to Cyntoia Brown; and

WHEREAS, annually, the Nashville NAACP Branch handles more than 2,000 discrimination complaints, and provides a vehicle for public and private employers and institutions to address and prevent discrimination issues through their complaints process; and

WHEREAS, the initiatives and work of the Nashville Branch would not be possible without the volunteer members who lend their time, talent, and resources towards furthering the goal of equity, equality and justice for all; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper that the Metropolitan Council hereby recognizes the 100th Anniversary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Nashville Branch, and honor their efforts to ensure a society in which all individuals have equal rights without discrimination based on race.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY:

Section 1. The Metropolitan Council hereby goes on record as recognizing the 100th Anniversary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Nashville Branch, and further goes on record as recognizing their legacy of advancement.

Section 2. The Metropolitan Council Office is directed to prepare a copy of this Resolution to be presented to NAACP Nashville Branch President Keith Caldwell.

Section 3. This Resolution shall take effect from and after its adoption, the welfare of The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County requiring it.

INTRODUCED BY:

Sharon W. Hurt

Freddie O'Connell

Mina Johnson

Bob Mendes

Brett Withers

Erica Gilmore

Tanaka Vercher

Delishia Porterfield

Members of Council